

HOW U.S. CONFIRMED SOVIET SPACE FEAT

By JOHN W. FINNEY
Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, April 22—At the annual convention here this week of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, an editor of a Texas newspaper arose to announce that some people down in Texas did not believe that the Soviet Union had actually put a man into space. The reaction of the Texans was symptomatic of a flurry of widespread doubt, seemingly stirred up by hurt national pride and deep-seated distrust of the Russians, about the authenticity of the Soviet feat.

The skeptics may find some solace in passing the Soviet accomplishment off as a hoax, but their doubt flies in the face not only of Soviet statements but also of every bit of evidence available to the American Government.

As Dr. Frank Press, a member of the President's Science Advisory Committee, told the doubting Texas editor, "there is no doubt in the minds of any knowledgeable person in this field that the Russians did what they said they did."

Why So Certain?

How could American officials be so sure that Maj. Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin had indeed circled the earth in a space ship, as triumphantly announced by the Moscow radio in the early morning hours of April 12? Their certainty springs from the fact that through a combination of electronic and traditional cloak-and-dagger espionage the United States is able to keep a secret eye on Soviet space activities.

For several years the United States has maintained a global surveillance network to keep track of Soviet launchings. So effective is the system that the United States has had knowledge of every major Russian space shot in advance of the Moscow announcement as well as of missile launchings that were never announced.

In the maze of Government secrecy, no information is much more sensitive or secret than the electronic intelligence obtained by listening-stations monitoring activities of the Soviet Union. On repeated occasions a public statement that the network exists or that it has monitored Soviet failures on the launching pad has provoked Presidential orders investigations into the source of the information.

The existence of the network, however, is now an established fact well known to the Russians and alluded to by Government officials in their announcements that the United States had known in advance of a Soviet space launching or in their hints that the Soviet Union has had launching failures just as the United States has had.

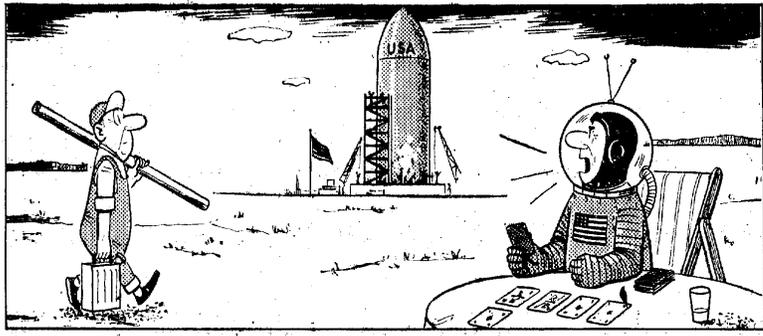
First Clue

The first clue that a major Soviet space shot was impending came early in April when Soviet tracking ships were spotted taking up position in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Immediately, official Washington and the secret surveillance network was alerted.

As launching preparations began at the Soviet missile site at Tyura Tam, north of the Aral Sea, secret United States listening posts in the Middle East tuned in on the increasing volume of radio messages passing between the launching site and downrange tracking stations. The messages and their

Despite the Scanty Information Issued by Moscow There Is No Doubt of Astronaut's Success

THREE WESTERN VIEWS OF THE SOVIETS AND SPACE



"Quit saying 'it's just about ready' every time you come by here!"



"Coming events cast shadows before?"



"Funny; it gives me that peculiar feeling of weightlessness."

very volume told what was going on at the launching pad.

It is no secret to the Soviet Union any longer that its launching activities are being subjected to electronic eavesdropping by the United States. The Russians, however, might be surprised at the effectiveness of this form of electronic spying.

One report common within United States space circles is that the United States is able to follow every minute and final seconds in a Soviet countdown, and, in fact, the countdown is marked on a blackboard in a United States monitoring station just as it presumably being done in the Soviet blockhouse at Tyura Tam. Probably the best testimonial to the effectiveness of this radio monitoring network is that at times the United States has been able to ascertain when the Soviet Union has encountered failures on the launching pad.

When the huge Soviet launching rocket rose above the horizon, long-range tracking radars in Turkey—and reportedly also in northern Iran and Pakistan—followed the space ship in the initial leg of its journey. By the time the rocket had flashed eastward across Siberia, it came within range of another powerful United States radar located on Shemya in the Aleutian Islands.

A quick look at the Shemya tracking information showed that a satellite had been launched, rather than just another long-range ballistic shot into the Pacific. Within seconds word of the satellite launching had been flashed to a command headquarters deep in the basement of the Pentagon and

Thus, the White House press secretary, Pierre Salinger, was able to announce shortly after Moscow radio made its 2 A. M. announcement that the United States had known in advance of the launching.

If the Soviet space ship had continued circling the earth—instead of making just one orbit carrying it down across the Pacific, around the tip of South America and then back up across the Atlantic and Africa to the Soviet Union—it would have come under detection by other segments of the United States surveillance network.

Surveillance Fence

Strung across the United States, from Georgia to California, is Spasur, the Space Surveillance fence, developed and operated by the Navy. Any satellite passing through the fence's fan-like beams of radio signals sends back telltale radio echoes. Within a few passes, Spasur, and its electronic computer, in Dahlgren, Va., is able to tell the orbital path of the satellite. Using this information, Air Force radars, such as the Lincoln Laboratory's Millstone Hill radar in Westford, Mass., are able to lock on to the satellite and provide more precise information on its orbit and even its size.

From the information of the electronic surveillance network, therefore, it was conclusively established that a Soviet satellite had been launched early Wednesday morning last week. It was also because of this network that American officials could be so definite in dismissing the still unexplained series of reports that seeped out of Moscow about how a Soviet astronaut had been launched before

tally, that have contributed in their own way to the doubts about the Soviet achievement.

As United States officials pointed out, they would have known if a Soviet satellite had been launched and there was no evidence that any space ship was placed into orbit before the five-ton vehicle of Major Gagarin.

But even if it was established that a Soviet satellite had gone into orbit, this still does not answer the questions of how did the United States know that a Soviet astronaut was inside the space ship and that it was, in fact, Major Gagarin who stepped out of the satellite after a trip around the world.

Here the evidence becomes

obscured in the most clandestine channels of eavesdropping. One possible confirmation may have come from monitoring the man that, according to Soviet counts, Major Gagarin is to carry during his trip from intelligence sources; the Soviet Union, the States may have received information confirming the account.

Gagarin Monitored?

Officials will not say any of Major Gagarin's sages were monitored; obvious reasons will not be given. What independent information may have been received from within the Union. All they will say is the official congratulatory President Kennedy was held until it was certain the Soviet Union had scored the historic first into space.

Ironically, the doubt that the Soviet feat has kindled by the secrecy of the Administration and of the Soviet Union. Under a new policy, the Administration withheld information, in the past, about the of the Soviet shot and the timing of the Soviet ships. To complicate the fusion in the public mind of information obtained military was not made immediately to the Aeronautics and Space Administration, which had been named as the official sponsor of Soviet space shots.

Soviet Evasiveness

The Soviet Union, for has contributed to the by its evasiveness and dictory accounts about circumstances of the flight unresolved are such details. Did the space ship have holes for Major Gagarin out at the earth below as the space ship desired to resist the treacherous temperatures of re-entry earth's atmosphere, and the astronaut return to in a parachute or in a capsule?

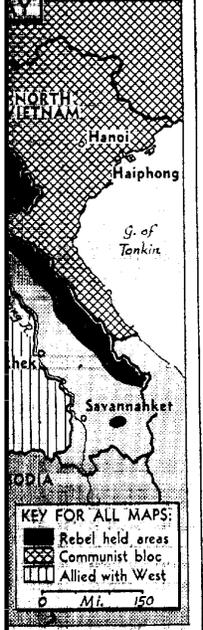
The Soviet Union, traditionally been reluctant to describe the details of its flights with the same openness as the United States, may clear up these minor mysteries. But there is no mystery whether Major Gagarin circled the earth. Every bit of evidence available to the United States confirms the feat and the possibility of decept

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

ASCENDANCY

for Fighting
ase Fire

OUR MONTHS



rch 23 news conference.

psychologically prepar-
soldiers to break and
almost any hostile fire.

Paksane, Thakhek, Savannakhet—all just across the river from Thailand.
The Indians, anxious to serve as peacemakers in this civil war, have already warned the Pathet Lao against seeking to take the Mekong Valley towns lest Thailand be provoked into moving troops across the river, now shallow and narrow at the end of the dry season.

Lasting Settlement?
Every responsible person here, both in the Government of Premier Prince Boun Oum and among foreign diplomatic missions, hopes some sort of political settlement can be worked out. Even the regime's strongman, Gen. Phoumi Nosavan, who balked at a political settlement last September by refusing to join Prince Souvanna Phouma's neutralist government, has said repeatedly he is willing now to go anywhere or meet anyone to find a solution to the differences splitting Laos.
Despite the new indication of a ceasefire, some think the Communists may accept no final settlement that does not involve the capitulation of the right wing Western-backed regime. That view had been reinforced this week when Souvanna Phouma cancelled the trip to Washington that he had sought earlier. The United States, chilly toward the neutralist Prince when he was Premier last autumn, had come to setting up a compromise cabinet of national unity that might keep the Pathet Lao from seizing the Government.

denies that the North
ese are present in the
forces. They probably
up 10 to 15 per cent of
ital. They serve as ad-
technical experts and
ymen. It is from North
m that the Pathet Lao
s the bulk of its supplies,
t in by truck and Soviet
from Hanoi. But the more
ate danger lies in the
at the Pathet Lao have
ble to capitalize on the
ent's Vietnam bat-
tters so adroitly in
weeks that the rebels are
a position to spill out of
ains into Mekong River
at several points—near

the Prince having tossed away
his once-desired chance to dis-
cuss the situation with Presi-
dent Kennedy and Secretary of
State Rusk, the view is widely
held that the Soviet officials he
saw in Moscow may have con-
vinced him all he need do is sit
tight—truce or no truce—and
he can be Premier of a unified
Laos without the necessity of
including right wingers or pro-
Westerners in his Government.
Whether or not the Kremlin
made a deal with Souvanna
Phouma, there is no question
that the Laotian initiative still
remains in the hands of the
rebels and their Communist bloc
allies.

DISTANT GOAL

Retain Their this week Conciliation efforts

IMPRESSIONS OF THE CRISIS IN LAOS



Fischetti, N. E. A.
"I am hurrying."



Flannery in The Baltimore Evening Sun
"Peace."



Lanks in The Daily Oklahoman
"Don't I hear noises out back?"



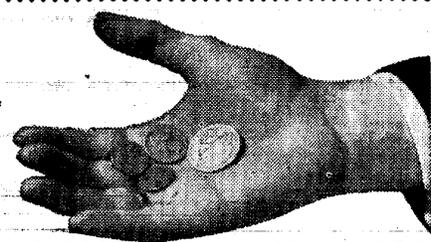
Hesse in The St. Louis Globe-Democrat
"Mole hole diplomacy."

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	Choice of Amounts		
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Partial disability, weekly, up to 26 weeks.....	37.50	25.00	12.50
Loss of life, to age 70.....	15,000	10,000	5,000
Loss of life after age 70.....	3,000	2,000	1,000
Loss of both hands or feet, or one hand and one foot, or sight of both eyes, payable in addition to weekly indemnity....	15,000	10,000	5,000
CURRENT QUARTERLY COST			
Preferred Risks	\$ 10.50	\$ 7.00	\$ 3.50
Standard Risks		9.80	4.90